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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/696,664	10/25/2000	Mark S. Abad	38-21(51721)B	5102

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EXAMINER
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BORIN, MICHAEL L.

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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1631

DATE MAILED: 11/13/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

**Office Action Summary**

Application No.

09/696,664

Applicant(s)

ABAD ET AL.

Examiner

Michael Borin

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the corresponding address --  
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 August 2003.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) 1 and 8-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☐ Claim(s) 1,8-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- \* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application) since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121 since a specific reference was included in the first sentence of the specification or in an Application Data Sheet. 37 CFR 1.78.

**Attachment(s)**

- ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

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## **DETAILED ACTION**

### ***Status of Claims***

1. Amendment filed 08/15/2003 is acknowledged. Claims 2-7 are canceled. Claims 8-13 are added. Claims 1, 8-13 are pending.

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. § 101/ 112-1***

2. Claims 1, 8-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention lacks patentable utility due to its not being supported by either specific and/or substantial utility or a well established utility.

The rejection is applied for the reasons of record as applied to claim 1.

The potential specific utilities suggested by Applicant (identifying polymorphisms, determining plant traits, DNA mapping) are an invitation to do further research to search for a specific and substantial utility for each polynucleotide claimed. No particular activity, function, or disease link is ascribed to the claimed polynucleotide SEQ ID No. 3. General uses of polynucleotides set forth in the specification, as filed, include acquiring genes, identifying polymorphisms, determining plant traits, and DNA mapping. None of these is considered to be specific and substantial in view of the limited information provided in the specification. No plant traits are attributed to SEQ ID NO. 3. No complete gene is disclosed for SEQ ID NO. 3. No DNA maps or chromosomal locations are identified. No polymorphisms

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are identified. The specification does not disclose how a polymorphism would be recognized by those of ordinary skill in the art given the incomplete sequences disclosed. One of ordinary skill in the art would have reason to doubt that SEQ ID NO.3 was full length based upon the short length of the claimed SEQ ID NO. Further research and experimentation would be required to identify a full length sequence that encoded a full-length protein, to characterize the chromosomal location, to determine the presence of polymorphisms, and to determine any associated plant traits. Identifying and studying the properties of the claimed subject matter itself or the mechanisms in which the claimed subject matter is involved does not define a "real world" context or use. Similarly, the other listed and asserted utilities are neither substantial nor specific due to being generic in nature and applicable to a myriad of such compounds. Further, no readily apparent well-established utility for any the polynucleotide is set forth in the specification. Applicant is reminded of *Brenner v. Manson*, 383 U.S. 519, 534-35, 148 USPQ 689 (1966), which stated that "a patent is not a hunting license. It is not a reward for the search, but compensation for its successful conclusion." As set forth above, the myriad of asserted utilities are general utilities applicable to a broad class of compounds, and do not meet the specific and substantial criteria for utility under the present guidelines.

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Applicant further argues that certain other types of inventions, such as golf clubs, would not be patentable; however, the utility of those apparatus are not sufficiently related to the isolated polynucleotides under examination such that any definite conclusions as to utility can be drawn. Applicant notes that "An important utility of a microscope resides in its use to identify..." however, whether that utility is the only utility or the only patentable utility is not clear, and not at issue here.

3. Claims 1, 8-13 are also rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph. Specifically, since the claimed invention is not supported by either a credible, specific, and substantial asserted utility or a well established utility for the reasons set forth above, one skilled in the art clearly would not know how to use the claimed invention.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112, first paragraph.***

4. Claims 1, 8, 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention. This is a written description rejection maintained for the reasons of record as applied to claim 1 and further in view of the following.

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The only nucleic acid molecule described by complete structure is those consisting of SEQ ID NO: 3. While it is acknowledged that Applicant need not describe "every nuance" of the claimed invention, the written description must bear a reasonable correlation to that which is claimed. The disclosed subgenus and species embraced by the claims are not representative of the entire genus being claimed. The genus of nucleic acid molecules being claimed embraces any and every type of nucleic acid molecule that comprises SEQ ID NO: 3 and additional sequences of any size and sequence, not just vector backbones. Clearly, at the time of filing, Applicant was not in possession of genomic materials that contain the common EST fragment, which are embraced by the open-ended claims. The specification does not disclose what characteristics these additional sequences may or may not have that are consistent with the operability of the nucleic acid molecules as probes or primers for detection of SEQ ID NO: 3 in a target sequence, and all disclosed uses for the claimed nucleic acid molecules are fundamentally as probes or primers, at least in some aspect. The specification does not disclose encoding sequences or open reading frames (ORFs).

With respect to full length mRNAs, cDNAs and genomic sequences, one skilled in the art would reasonably conclude that the claims embrace these nucleic acid molecules, and the specification provides no physical (i.e. structural) characteristics of these

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molecules to distinguish them from other nucleic acid molecules comprising SEQ ID NO:3 and no other indication that would suggest Applicant possessed them.

5. Furthermore, in addition to the above rejection, claims 10-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to reasonably convey to one skilled in the relevant art that the inventors, at the time the application was filed, had possession of the claimed invention.

The claims are drawn to polynucleotides having less than 100% degree of identity with SEQ ID NO: 3. The specification discloses SEQ ID NO: 3 which encodes a maize protein. Polynucleotide SEQ ID No. 3 itself meets the written description provision of 35 USC 112, first paragraph. However, claims 13-16, drawn to nucleotide sequences having less than 100% identity to the elected SEQ ID 3, does not have sufficient description in the specification as description of species is insufficient to support a highly variable genus. Applicant is advised that absent factual evidence, a percentage sequence similarity of less than 100% over the entire length is not deemed to reasonably support to one skilled in the art whether the biochemical activity of newly discovered sequence would be the same as that of similar known biomolecule. The effects of changes in the structure are largely unpredictable as to which ones have a significant effect versus not. Therefore, sequence similarity result

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in an unpredictable and therefore unreliable correspondence between the newly discovered sequence and a similar biomolecule of known expression or function. No sequence information indicating what is the necessary common attribute for the polynucleotides encompassed by the claimed genus to encode proteins belonging to the same species (maize, for example). The specification provides insufficient written description to support the genus encompassed by the claims.

***Conclusion.***

6. No claims are allowed.
7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing



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date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael Borin whose telephone number is (703) 305-4506. Dr. Borin can normally be reached between the hours of 8:30 A.M. to 5:00 P.M. EST Monday to Friday. If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Mr. Michael Woodward, can be reached on (703) 308-4028. The fax telephone number for this group is (703) 305-3014.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating the status of this application should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0196.

November 6, 2003

mlb

MICHAEL BORIN, PH.D.  
PRIMARY EXAMINER

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Michael Borin', is written over the printed name and title.